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Peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau

Conclusions and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission on the current situation in Guinea-Bissau

1. After extensive consultations with members of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Government authorities, civil society and international and regional organizations, a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in the country (PBC/3/GNB/3) was adopted on 1 October 2008. Consultations are now under way on the conclusion of a monitoring mechanism to assess progress in the implementation of the Strategic Framework. The Framework outlines the main priorities for peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau, among which is the conduct of a successful electoral process.

2. The legislative elections took place as scheduled on 16 November. The international community welcomed the good organization, calm and transparency of voting operations and the high level of participation. The elections are an important milestone in the country's efforts to lay the foundations of democracy in its transition from conflict to peace. The role of the Peacebuilding Commission was critical in mobilizing international support for the electoral process. In particular, the Commission undertook to close the financial gap in the electoral budget and galvanize financial and technical support to assist with key components of the electoral process, namely, voter registration, civic education campaigns and training of electoral staff.

3. On 23 November, however, an armed attack on the official residence of President Vieira was reported. The incident was strongly condemned by the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, the President of the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries.

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Conclusions

4. The successful holding of legislative elections underscored that the people of Guinea-Bissau were committed to the ongoing democratic process. The reported episode of violence, however, demonstrates the fragility of the situation. While the Commission notes the need to ensure full respect for the results of the election and the rule of law, the international community should continue to assist Guinea-Bissau in maintaining political stability and engaging the democratically elected authorities of the country in efforts for the consolidation of peace. In particular, it is important to step up efforts for the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding. In this respect, the Commission offers the recommendations set out below.

Recommendations

5. **The Commission recommends that the Government and national stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau:**

(a) Fully commit to the process of peaceful democratic consolidation in the country and fully observe the rule of law;

(b) Ensure the prevalence of civilian rule and continue to implement the Security and Defence Sector Reform Plan;

(c) Make every effort to maintain political stability, refrain from any form of violence and pay due respect to constitutional law;

(d) Maintain a constructive engagement with the international community with a view to consolidating the partnership to address the challenges faced by the country, including the priorities outlined in the Strategic Framework;

(e) Continue to engage with the Peacebuilding Commission in efforts to consolidate peace in the country, including through the conclusion of consultations on the establishment of a monitoring and tracking mechanism to assess progress in the implementation of the Strategic Framework.

6. **The Commission recommends that the Security Council:**

(a) Continue to monitor closely the situation in Guinea-Bissau, especially in the light of the process of consolidation of peace that is under way and the threats to the maintenance of peace and security;

(b) In reviewing the mandate of the Peacebuilding Support Office in Bissau, address the need for a strengthened and more coherent and integrated United Nations presence in Guinea-Bissau to support more effectively peace consolidation efforts.

7. **The Commission recommends that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council**, in keeping the dialogue with the Peacebuilding Commission, pay close attention to the developments on the ground and, in this connection, contribute to the discussion on how to proceed in the implementation of peacebuilding priorities.

8. **The Commission recommends that international financial institutions, donors and the Government:**

(a) Maintain a constructive engagement, taking into account the fragile situation of the country, with a view to helping address its mounting challenges, within the priorities for peacebuilding outlined in the Strategic Framework;

(b) Enhance their coordination efforts in support of the implementation of the Strategic Framework;

(c) Follow up actively the commitments made at the International Conference on Drug Trafficking in Guinea-Bissau, held in Lisbon in December 2007, and the Geneva donors' conference;

(d) Explore additional mechanisms to address from a regional perspective and to curb down the forces of demand and supply that propel the drug-trafficking problem in Guinea-Bissau.

9. **The Commission recommends that the United Nations Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes:**

(a) Continue to support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in its engagement with Guinea-Bissau;

(b) Continue to review and enhance the capacity to allow the rapid implementation of quick-impact projects of the Peacebuilding Fund as defined by the Government of Guinea-Bissau within the priorities outlined in the Strategic Framework;

(c) Continue to support the efforts of the Government of Guinea-Bissau to address the challenges faced by the country, including the priorities outlined in the Strategic Framework.

10. The Peacebuilding Commission renews its commitment to pay close attention to developments in Guinea-Bissau, in particular with regard to the democratic transition following the legislative elections, and to monitor progress and risks for the consolidation of peace.